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SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS ASSESS SUDAN'S CENSUS ENUMERATION AS POSITIVE DESPITE MANY GAPS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 858
[1B.](#) KHARTOUM 697
[1C.](#) KHARTOUM 685
[1D.](#) KHARTOUM 608

SUMMARY

[11.](#) (SBU) The Monitoring and Observation Committee's (MOC's) international and domestic census enumeration observation team's preliminary findings indicate that enumeration went "well" across Sudan and the quality of data collected was "good." Although the areas country-wide in which the nearly 60 observers were posted suffered few problems during enumeration, the areas they were unable to observe due to insecurity paint a much different picture. Some residents in Darfur, particularly IDPs and rebels, and Southern Kordofan resisted the census. Others went uncounted simply due to enumerators' inability to access their areas. Access to some areas in the South also was difficult and insecurity was a problem in Upper Nile and Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal. These regions suffered from incomplete or no data, with a resulting undercount. In addition, top SPLM officials complain that the census was not transparent and are withholding judgment on the quality and completeness of enumeration until official results are released (ref A). End summary.

LACK OF NATION-WIDE COVERAGE BIASED FINDINGS

[12.](#) (U) On 9 June, the DFID-funded team of census experts that planned the international and domestic mission to monitor the conduct of census enumeration presented its preliminary findings, based on 25 state and nine regional reports compiled by a 60-member international and domestic observation team that deployed across Sudan during the April 22 - 6 May census enumeration period. While census monitors were present in all states, they did not travel to enumeration areas (EAs) that the UN deemed as insecure or unsafe. Therefore, their findings do not account for the conduct of enumeration in such sensitive and critical areas as large parts of Darfur, parts of Southern Kordofan, and regions of Upper Nile state and Northern and Western Bahr El Ghazal states. According to the experts, these gaps in data collection lead to "slightly biased" findings on the nature of nation-wide census conduct.

ENUMERATION PROCESS, DATA QUALITY "GOOD"

[13.](#) (U) Each observer looked at ten EAs - six rural and four urban - in their assigned state. In the areas they monitored, observers witnessed 100 percent enumeration coverage. Overall, they judged enumeration went well and that the quality of data was captured is "good." EA maps were produced using satellite imagery and GPS technology. According to monitors, population movements just prior to the census, such as IDPs and refugees returns to southern Sudan, created larger EAs and necessitated creation of new ones at the time

of enumeration.

¶14. (U) Observers reported that insecurity was a major cause of disruption to census enumeration and monitoring in parts of Darfur, Southern Kordofan, Greater Upper Nile, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal, and the Eastern region. The team speculates that insecurity could have left these areas undercounted (ref B).

CENSUS ADVOCACY INADEQUATE

¶15. (U) Monitors rated advocacy for the census as insufficient. They noted that many Sudanese were unclear about the census date, due to the last-minute postponement of the census by one-week. Additionally, many believed that the enumeration exercise would last only one day, rather than two weeks. Regardless of the weak information campaign and some confusion over timing, observers found the population was "generally positive" towards the enumeration exercise.

HUGE VARIATION IN CENSUS FACILITIES

¶16. (U) Observers noted great variation among state and county census offices across the country. Overall, the team deemed census facilities "generally inadequate" and storage facilities for census material "grossly inadequate." Police and military support to protect census and storage facilities was deemed "satisfactory."

DEMOGRAPHICS AND QUALITY OF ENUMERATORS

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¶17. (U) The Central Bureau of Statistics' (CBS) and the Southern Sudan Census Commission's (SSCCSE) recruitment of enumerators was found to be "generally fair and consistent." Observers judged enumerators and their supervisors as competent and "very well trained." Sixty-one percent of enumerators were male, 39 percent female. Their mean age was 30 years. The majority of enumerators were teachers (60 percent) and students (14 percent).

AMELIORATION OF FORM SHORTAGE ISSUE

¶18. (U) At the state and local level in southern Sudan, transportation of material to certain EAs proved challenging. Observers noted that, except in some parts of Upper Nile state and Northern and Western Bahr El Ghazal states, materials generally arrived in time for the start of enumeration, despite the South's complicated terrain, weather, and logistics. They also noted that prompt action was taken to secure more questionnaires when there were shortages.

MOC CHAIRMAN'S REACTION TO THE REPORT

¶19. (SBU) MOC Chairman Abdelbagi Gailani stated that the team's findings were "scientific" and "well-convincing," however he indicated that there will be a "modification here and there" to the final report. He congratulated the international experts for their work. He also announced that the MOC mahaliya-level monitors (ref C) will write a separate report of their observations of the enumeration phase.

POST-ENUMERATION PHASE MONITORING

¶10. (SBU) In a positive step, the MOC has agreed to allow four observers - two international and two domestic - to monitor data processing at the data processing centers in Khartoum and Rumbek. The MOC has written up a draft concept paper on post-enumeration phase monitoring and is allowing international donors to provide input. The USG, UNFPA, and the World Bank have actively provided feedback on the concept paper which should be completed in the coming weeks. According to the UNFPA Chief Technical Rep for the

census Bob Kandeh, states still are transporting completed questionnaires to the two data processing centers. Data scanning is unlikely to begin before mid-July. In other encouraging news, CBS Director and Census Controller Dr. Yasin Abdeen set up a five-man committee to supervise data processing at the CBS and the SSCCSE as a single national project. SSCCSE Chairman Isaiah Chol has accepted Abdeen's request that Chol chair the national committee. This type of cooperation between the CBS and the SSCCSE is unprecedented and represents progress in initiating a unified approach to arriving at final nation-wide census results.

COMMENT

¶11. (SBU) Although generally positive, the donor-funded international and national census enumeration monitoring team's findings do not tell the full story. The monitors' inability to observe enumeration and data collection in sensitive and critical areas of Darfur, Southern Kordofan and the South leaves untold a story of undercounts, resistance to census participation, and the likelihood that the South will reject final census results even with "good" data quality (ref C). Nonetheless, the MOC Chairman seemed pleased with the team's preliminary findings. Although there had been wrangling over exactly who would write the final census-enumeration report, the MOC is unlikely to change much of the team's language, given the report's positive overall tone (ref D).

¶12. (SBU) COMMENT CONTINUED. After months of pushing, the U.S., UK, EC, and the World Bank finally were victorious in getting the MOC to allow a team of international and national monitors observe the data input, processing, editing and merging phases. In fact, although donors have been skeptical (and rightfully so) of the NCP-run MOC from the start, the body worked with the international community more amicably and closely, albeit sometimes grudgingly, as time went on. The UN, the World Bank and the U.S. provided significant expert feedback to the MOC's concept paper for post-enumeration monitoring, which we hope will lead to recruiting of qualified data processors to act as monitors during the critical data input, editing, and analysis phases, when manipulation could occur. Although the MOC has yet to draft a budget for the post-enumeration monitoring mission, it is likely that DFID will fund the effort (as we have hoped it would and worked to persuade it), given the UK's history of building confidence in and supporting the MOC and its mission.

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FERNANDEZ